ATLAS

MARVEL TALES

THE STRANGEST STORIES EVER TOLD!

MARVEL TALES

10¢

AUG.

NO. 117

"TERROR IN THE NORTH!"

"UNCLE GIDEON'S GOLD!"

"RED TAPE!"

"A LITTLE PAIN NEVER HURT ANYBODY!"

ON SALE MONTHLY

THE WOLF THREW THE VILLAGERS FOR A LOUP-DE-LOUP...YET THERE WAS ONE MAN WHO CRIED "TIMBER WOLF!" WHEN HIS FRIENDS SPOKE OF A WEREWOLF! SOMEWHERE OUT THERE IN THE STORM, STALKED THE ANSWER TO THE GHASTLY RIDDLE!

TERROR IN THE NORTH!

I DIDN'T NOTICE THE BODY TILL THE LIGHTNING FLASHED... HE'S PROBABLY FROM THE VILLAGE AHEAD... WAS FELLED BY THE STORM AND CRACKED HIS SKULL!
SACRE BLEU, THIS ONE WAS NOT KILLED BY THE STORM, MONSIEUR! REGARD THE THROAT... TORN OUT! THIS IS THE WORK OF A WOLF... A LOUP-GAROU... A WEREWOLF, BY GAR!
ANOTHER CHILLING TALE OF SUSPENSE

BE ASSURED, MONSIEUR MARSH, THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER! LET US HURRY AND SEEK SHELTER IN THE VILLAGE!
YOU FRENCH CANUCKS ARE ALL ALIKE! HERE YOU ARE, A WILDERNESS GUIDE, WHO HAS FACED ALL KINDS OF SAVAGE, WOUNDED ANIMALS... SHOT RAPIDS IN A FLIMSY CANOE...

...YET WHEN YOU FACE SOMETHING LIKE THIS THAT STIRS YOUR SUPERSTITIOUS MIND, YOU GO ALL TO PIECES! THOSE WEREWOLF LEGENDS ARE ALL NONSENSE!
I BEG OF YOU, MONSIEUR, DO NOT SAY THAT! COME, PLEASE, LET US NOT LINGER!
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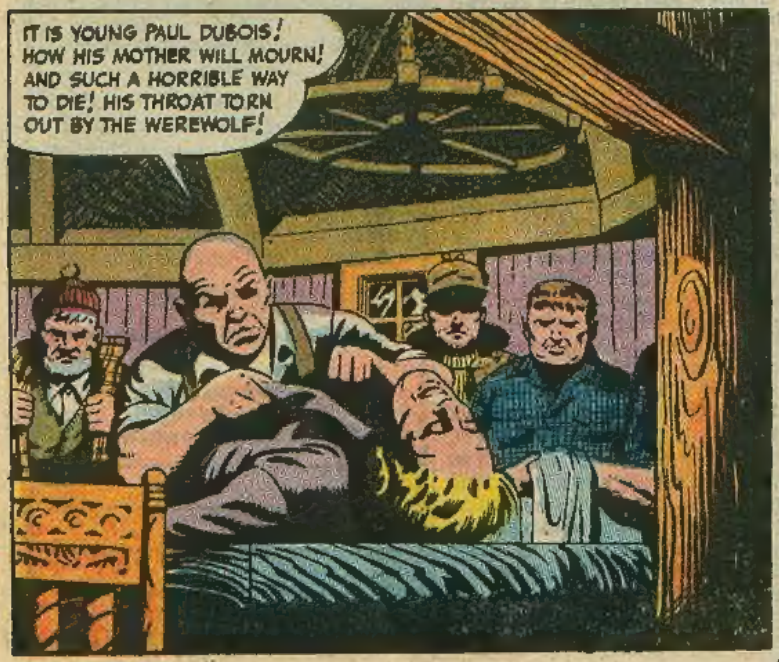
HEAR IT? THE WEREWOLF!
NONSENSE! IT'S JUST A BIG TIMBER WOLF... PROBABLY THE ONE WHO KILLED THIS POOR WRETCH! COME ON, TAKE HIS FEET! WE'LL CARRY HIM INTO THE VILLAGE!
AWWOOOOOOO

YOU FEEL A BIT CONTEMPTUOUS OF YOUR GUIDE, DON'T YOU, PHILLIP MARSH? HOW CAN ANYONE IN THIS DAY AND AGE BELIEVE IN WEREWOLVES? SILLY, ISN'T IT?
I SAW THE TRACKS, MONSIEUR... BIG WOLF TRACKS ALL AROUND THE BODY! TOO BIG TO HAVE BEEN MADE BY AN ORDINARY WOLF!
RELAX, PIERRE! THERE'S THE VILLAGE AHEAD!

I SAW THE TRACKS TOO, AND OF COURSE THEY WEREN'T MADE BY AN ORDINARY WOLF! BUT THAT'S NO REASON TO BELIEVE IT'S A WEREWOLF! THIS WAS DONE BY A BIG TIMBER WOLF WHO JUST DOESN'T HAVE ANY FEAR OF MAN... THAT'S ALL!
WE TAKE HIM TO INN... THERE WILL BE WINE THERE, AND THAT IS SOMETHING WHICH I NEED VERY MUCH AT THIS MOMENT!

WE FOUND THIS FELLOW IN THE WOODS...
NAME OF A NAME... ANOTHER ONE! LE BON DIEU PROTECT US ALL! THE WEREWOLF HAS CLAIMED ANOTHER VICTIM!



HE IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE DIED! HAD HE BEEN BUT BITTEN, AND SURVIVED, THE DREAD VENOM WOULD HAVE ENTERED HIS VEINS AND TURNED HIM INTO A WEREWOLF TOO!
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THE SCARED VOICES, THE STORM CRASHING OUTSIDE, THE ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN AND HORRIBLE, CAUSE THE SHORT HAIRS ON THE BACK OF YOUR NECK TO RISE, DON'T THEY, MARSH? OF COURSE, *YOU'RE* NOT FRIGHTENED... *YOU'RE NOT* A SUPERSTITIOUS FOOL...

WE MUST NOT GO OUT AFTER DARK! WE MUST BAND TOGETHER... FIND SOME WAY TO KILL THIS LOUP-GAROU WHO PROWLS! A SILVER BULLET, I HAVE HEARD, IS THE ONLY THING THAT CAN KILL IT!

ONE MUST CARRY WOLFBANE THE LEGEND SAYS...

BUT WHO WILL HUNT THE BEAST? *NOT I!*

NOR I!

NOR I!

THIS IS THE 20TH CENTURY, NOT THE DARK AGES! SPEAK OUT, MARSH... SHOW THEM WHAT YOU THINK OF THEIR STUPID SUPERSTITIONS, THEIR SILLY LEGENDS...

YOU'RE A BUNCH OF GROWN MEN, YET YOU ACT LIKE CHILDREN! THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A WEREWOLF! THIS TALK OF YOURS IS INCREDIBLE IN THIS DAY AND AGE! IF YOU WEREN'T SO SERIOUS ABOUT IT, IT WOULD BE SOMETHING TO LAUGH AT!

ONE CANNOT LAUGH AT EVIDENCE SUCH AS THIS, MONSIEUR!

THE MAN WAS KILLED BY A WOLF... I'LL GRANT YOU THAT! BUT IT WAS AN *ORDINARY* WOLF... BIGGER AND BOLDER THAN USUAL, BUT *JUST A WOLF, NOT A WEREWOLF!*

YOU MAY BELIEVE WHAT YOU WILL, MONSIEUR! BUT *WE KNOW* WHAT WE *KNOW!*

THIS IS NONSENSE! I'LL *PROVE* IT TO YOU! I'M GOING OUT AND TRAIL THAT WOLF, KILL HIM AND BRING HIM BACK! PERHAPS YOU WON'T ACT LIKE FRIGHTENED CHILDREN!

NON, MONSIEUR, DO NOT DO THIS! IT WAITS OUT THERE IN THE STORM!

LAUGH AT THEM, MARSH! THAT'S IT... SHOW THEM YOUR DISDAIN! PICK UP YOUR EQUIPMENT, YOUR GUN, YOUR TENT... MAKE A GRAND EXIT OUT INTO THE STORM!

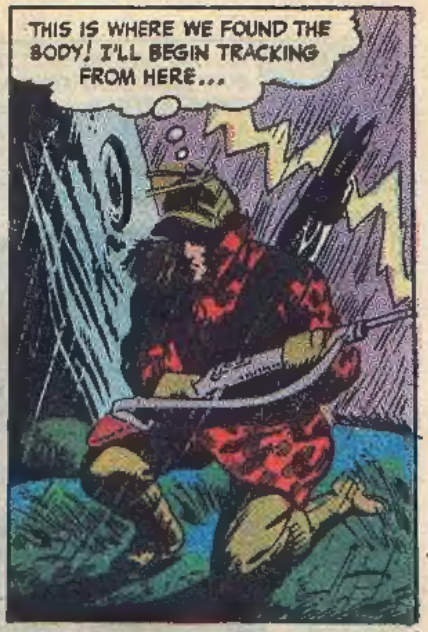
I'LL BE BACK IN TWO DAYS, DRAGGING THAT TIMBER WOLF BEHIND ME!

MONSIEUR, PLEASE! YOU MUST NOT GO!

IT IS USELESS TO TRY TO STOP THE AMERICAN, PIERRE! WE WILL PRAY FOR YOU, MONSIEUR! PRAY THAT IT *KILLS* YOU, THAT IT DOES *NOT BITE* YOU SO THAT *YOU* TURN INTO A *WEREWOLF, TOO!*

I'LL PICK UP THE TRACKS WHERE WE FOUND THE BODY! I'VE GOT A HUNCH IT'S DENNED-UP PRETTY CLOSE TO THAT SPOT...

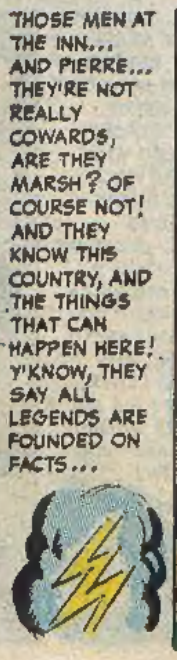
PROBABLY HAS A MATE AND CUBS NEARBY AND WAS AFRAID THE VILLAGER WAS GOING TO DO THEM SOME HARM, SO IT KILLED HIM!
BAROM!


THIS IS WHERE WE FOUND THE BODY! I'LL BEGIN TRACKING FROM HERE...

AN HOUR HAS GONE BY! THE STORM IS GETTING WORSE...
TRACKS ARE VERY FRESH...THEY'VE MOVED IN A CIRCLE! STORM'S GETTING REALLY BAD, NOW! I'LL PUT UP THE TENT AND WAIT TILL IT PASSES BY...

BY MORNING THE STORM SHOULD'VE BLOWN ITSELF OUT! THEN I'LL POKE AMONG THE ROCKS NEARBY UNTIL I FIND THE WOLF'S DEN...

THERE, NOW YOU'RE NICE AND DRY, MARSH! BUT WHAT'S THAT NOISE? IT'S KIND OF CLOSE, ISN'T IT? SOUNDS LIKE A WOLF, DOESN'T IT?
KIND OF A FUNNY HOWL! IT'S THE WOLF ALRIGHT! BUT IT SOUNDS ALMOST... ALMOST HUMAN!
AWOOOO


THOSE MEN AT THE INN... AND PIERRE... THEY'RE NOT REALLY COWARDS, ARE THEY MARSH? OF COURSE NOT! AND THEY KNOW THIS COUNTRY, AND THE THINGS THAT CAN HAPPEN HERE! Y'KNOW, THEY SAY ALL LEGENDS ARE FOUNDED ON FACTS...

BAH! I'M GETTING JITTERY! IT'S THIS STORM! I'LL SHAVE... REFRESH MYSELF, THEN I'LL MAKE SOME COFFEE... THAT'LL HELP...
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CAN'T FIND YOUR SHAVING THINGS, MARSH? BUT LOOK... THERE'S A BOTTLE! THAT'LL HELP... BOURBON'S GOOD FOR THE NERVES! HAVE A FEW DRINKS AND SLEEP, MARSH, SLEEP AND FORGET!

AH, THAT HITS THE SPOT! THOSE GUYS BACK THERE ARE IDIOTIC FOOLS! BITTEN BY A WEREWOLF AND YOU TURN INTO ONE! HA! GUESS I WAS A FOOL TO BOAST THAT WAY THOUGH! WISH I WAS BACK AT THE INN...

YOU MUSTN'T THINK YOU WERE A FOOL TO DOUBT THOSE MEN, MARSH! YOU'RE NO COWARD! DON'T LET YOUR NERVES GET THE BETTER OF YOU! SLEEP, MARSH, SLEEP AND DREAM...

WAKE UP, MARSH! SOMETHING'S DARTING OUT THE DOOR...SOMETHING GREY! SHOOT, MARSH! *SHOOT!*

WOLF! I THOUGHT I DREAMED...

BAM!

WHAT'S THE MATTER? FEEL A PAIN IN YOUR ARM...A BITING PAIN? DON'T BE AFRAID...LOOK DOWN...SEE WHAT IT IS...

IT...IT *WASN'T* A DREAM! HE SNEAKED IN...BIT ME!

WE WILL PRAY THAT IT *KILLS* YOU...THAT IT DOES NOT *BITE* YOU SO THAT *YOU* TURN INTO A *WEREWOLF* TOO...

THE MIRROR THAT FELL TO THE FLOOR... THERE'S MOVEMENT IN IT, MARSH! WHAT IS IT? LOOK INTO IT! WHAT DO YOU SEE?

IT...IT'S *TRUE!* IT BIT ME! AND I'M TURNING...*I'M TURNING!* *NO! NO! I WON'T BE LIKE THAT! I WON'T BE A WEREWOLF!*

ARRGGHHHH!

BAM!

TCH, TCH, MARSH, YOU LET YOUR NERVES GET THE BETTER OF YOU! YOU SHOULD'VE LOOKED MORE CLOSELY BEFORE YOU KILLED YOURSELF! THE WOLF YOU SAW IN THE MIRROR WAS STANDING *OUTSIDE* YOUR TENT! HE'S JUST AN ORDINARY WOLF, MARSH! YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT THAT! SEE, HE'S ABOUT TO LEAVE... HE KNOWS HIS MATE AND CUBS IN THE CAVE NEARBY ARE SAFE NOW!

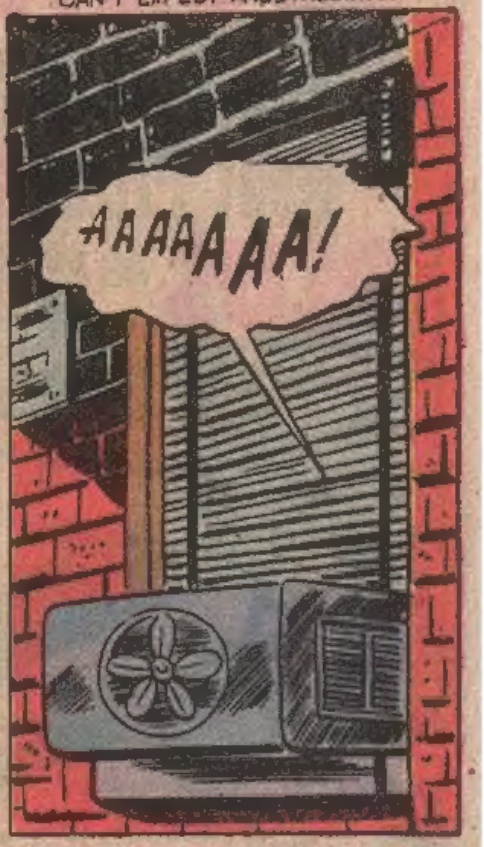
THE END

A LITTLE PAIN NEVER HURT ANYBODY

WHY NOT? A LITTLE PAIN NEVER HURT ANYBODY!
H-HEY, DOC...! DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GONNA PULL MY TOOTH WITHOUT FIRST GIVING ME A NEEDLE OR SOMETHING!
ART: GIL KANE

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MARVEL TALES #117

MY NAME IS SIMON TULLIVER! I AM A DENTAL SURGEON! I ALWAYS QUOTE THE LOWEST PRICE IN TOWN ON ALL MY WORK! NATURALLY, AT SUCH A LOW RATE, THE PATIENT CAN'T EXPECT ANESTHESIA...



THAT'S MY WIFE MARTHA IN THE WHITE UNIFORM! SHE'S ALWAYS TELLING ME I SHOULD USE AN ANESTHETIC ON MY PATIENTS BEFORE AN EXTRACTION...

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NO OTHER DENTIST IS AS CALLOUS AS YOU, SIMON! ALL THE OTHERS TRY TO HELP THEIR PATIENTS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, BUT YOU...
WHEN HE COMES TO, LET HIM RINSE HIS MOUTH WITH SALT WATER... MEANWHILE, DEAR WIFE, KEEP YOUR FOOL MOUTH SHUT!
SOMETIMES I'M TEMPTED TO HIRE A PROFESSIONAL NURSE... BUT A PROFESSIONAL NURSE WOULD REPORT ME TO THE DENTAL BOARD... THEY WOULD NEVER TOLERATE MY CHEAP METHODS OF TREATING MY PATIENTS!
YOU POOR MAN!
FRANKLY, I AM QUITE AMUSED BY HOW MARTHA KEEPS SOBBING AND WINCING WHILE I WORK ON MY PATIENTS! SOMETIMES, OF COURSE, SHE DOES GET OUT OF HAND...
YOU BRUTE! THAT MAN WON'T BE ABLE TO SLEEP ALL NIGHT!
LOWER YOUR VOICE! THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT IN THE WAITING ROOM!
I WANT THEM TO HEAR! OOH!
NOW WILL YOU SHUT UP?
SIMON!
MARTHA SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO EXCITE ME THIG WAY! SHE'S BEEN MY WIFE LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW HOW UNDUE EXCITEMENT ALWAYS BRINGS ON ONE OF MY FAINTING SPELLS!
I'M COMING TO NOW... I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH TIME HAS PASSED... MY HEAD IS ON MARTHA'S LAP! THOSE ARE MARTHA'S FINGERS TREMBLINGLY STROKING MY BROW, HER EYES ARE WET WITH TEARS!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIMON?
I'M ALIVE, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN! BUT NO THANKS TO YOU!
PLEASE, SIMON... I WANT TO BE A GOOD WIFE! I WANT TO LOVE YOU, TO HELP YOU... FOR MY SAKE, WON'T YOU PLEASE TRY TO BE MORE GENTLE WITH YOUR PATIENTS? WHY MUST YOU TRY TO SAVE MONEY AT THE EXPENSE OF YOUR PATIENTS?
IF I'VE SAID IT ONCE, MARTHA, I'VE SAID IT A MILLION TIMES... A LITTLE PAIN NEVER HURT ANYBODY!
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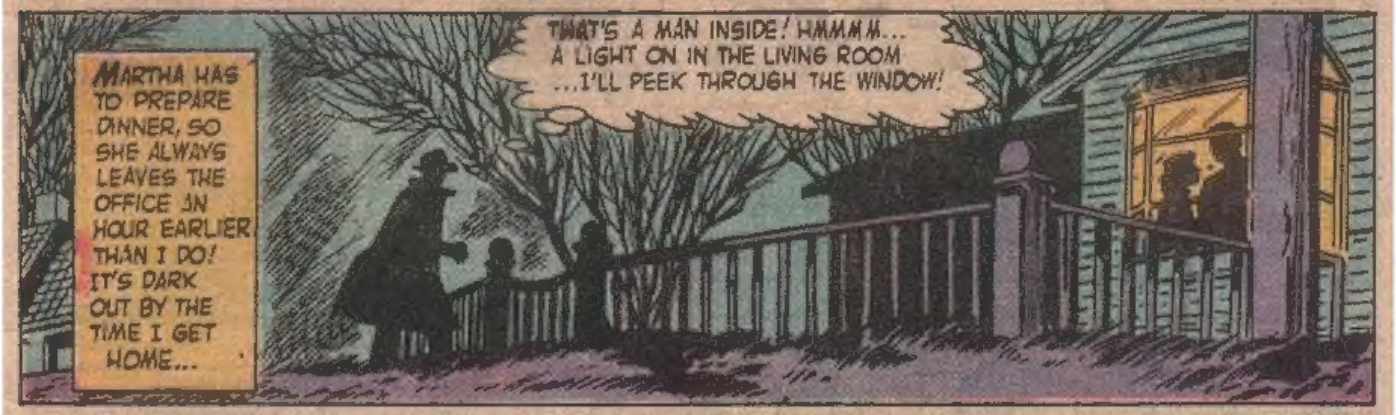
HOUSING SHORTAGE GOT YOU DOWN? TRY THE TOMB OF DRACULA!

AND THOSE ARE MY FINAL WORDS! THE NEXT DAY FINDS ME BACK AT WORK...
SAY, DOC... CAN'T YOU GIVE ME NOVOCAIN?
I HATE IT WHEN MY PATIENTS INSIST ON SOME FORM OF ANESTHETIC...
IT'S LUCKY I DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS TOO OFTEN!
THIS PAIN-RELIEVER COSTS ME MONEY! WHY DO THEY INSIST?


MARTHA HAS TO PREPARE DINNER, SO SHE ALWAYS LEAVES THE OFFICE AN HOUR EARLIER THAN I DO! IT'S DARK OUT BY THE TIME I GET HOME...
THAT'S A MAN INSIDE! HMMMM... A LIGHT ON IN THE LIVING ROOM ...I'LL PEEK THROUGH THE WINDOW!

THAT'S JOHN BAINBRIDGE IN THERE WITH HER! HE ALWAYS DID LIKE MARTHA!
I'VE BEEN HEARING STORIES ABOUT YOU AND SIMON... THAT HE FORCES YOU TO WORK AS HIS NURSE... AND I'VE HEARD HOW HE HATES TO USE ANYTHING TO EASE HIS PATIENTS' PAIN! HOW CAN YOU LOVE A CHEAP, HEARTLESS MAN LIKE THAT?
PLEASE, JOHN... SIMON'S MY HUSBAND!
I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU, MARTHA! AS LONG AS I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE HAPPY, I STAYED AWAY!
ALL THESE YEARS, JOHN, I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOUR CAREER IN THE PAPERS ...YOU'RE AN IMPORTANT BRAIN SURGEON WITH A REPUTATION TO UPHOLD...
I CAN FEEL MY FINGERS SLOWLY CLENCHING INTO TWO JAGGED FISTS...
3

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AT FIRST THEY DON'T HEAR ME CREEP IN! BUT THEN...

SIMON! WATCH OUT, JOHN!

YOU'LL NEVER TAKE MY WIFE AWAY FROM ME! NEVER! IT'LL HAVE TO BE OVER MY DEAD BODY!

WHEN MARTHA MAKES THE MISTAKE OF GRABBING AT MY ARM, I PUSH HER OUT OF MY WAY... I HAVE A PLAN IN MIND, AND *THIS* IS THE MOMENT TO DO IT!

HE'S STILL DAZED... GOOD! NOW'S MY CHANCE TO GET RID OF HIM ONCE AND FOR ALL!

MY HANDS FITTED NEATLY AROUND HIS THROAT...

BUT SUDDENLY EVERYTHING TURNS HAZY...

AND I FALL INTO ONE OF MY FAINTING SPELLS!

YOU ASKED FOR IT— WE DID IT! MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES #1— NOW ON SALE!

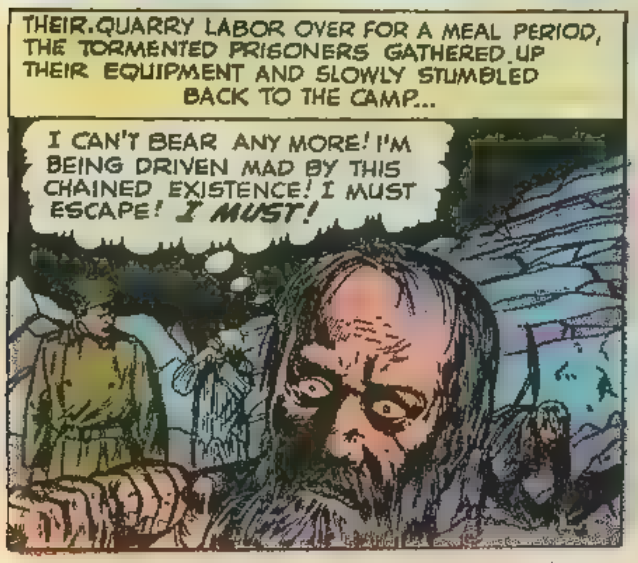
I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH TIME HAS PASSED. MY EYES ARE FLUTTERING OPEN
W-WHERE AM I'
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO COME TO! HOW DO YOU FEEL?
N-NOT TOO BAD! WHERE'S MARTHA?
SHE'S AT HOME! BY THE WAY, SHE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT THOSE FAINTING SPELLS OF YOURS.. AND I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO HELP YOU..
THEY'RE CAUSED BY A SMALL CLOT ON THE BRAIN THAT I'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE AT ALL REMOVING
THIS IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY! RELAX, TILLIVER IT'LL ONLY TAKE A FEW MINUTES.
W-WAIT! AREN'T YOU GOING TO GIVE ME ETHER?
ETHER? THAT'S TOO EXPENSIVE! AND BESIDES, DON'T YOU KNOW
A LITTE PAIN NEVER HURT ANYBODY!
THE END

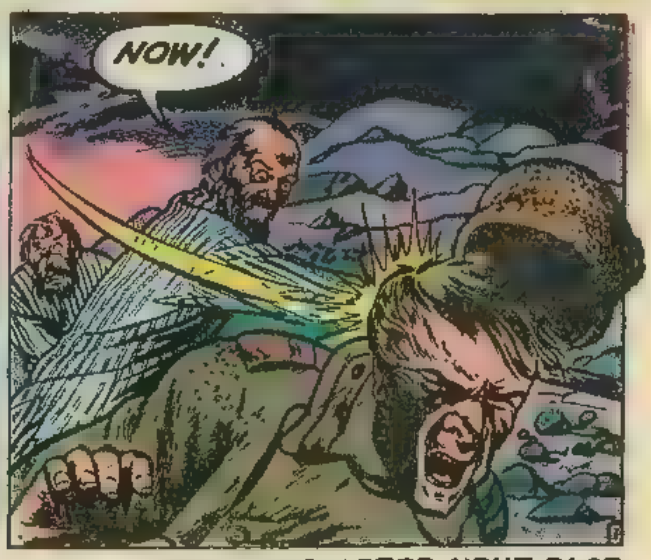
FEODOR KAZLISKY FELT THE ENDLESS PAIN OF WHIPS UPON HIS BACK, AS PRISON GUARDS FLAYED THE HELPLESS PRISONERS WITH CRUEL UNENDING GLEE

I WAIT IN THE DUNGEON!

IN MARCH, 1923, REPEATED HORRORS OF THE ASIAN PRISON CAMP 13 WERE MEEKLY ACCEPTED BY ALL THE INMATES... ALL BUT FEODOR KAZLISKY, #1553, WHOSE PATIENCE WAS APPROACHING THE BREAKING POINT...

SAM KWESKIN


THEIR QUARRY LABOR OVER FOR A MEAL PERIOD, THE TORMENTED PRISONERS GATHERED UP THEIR EQUIPMENT AND SLOWLY STUMBLED BACK TO THE CAMP...
I CAN'T BEAR ANY MORE! I'M BEING DRIVEN MAD BY THIS CHAINED EXISTENCE! I MUST ESCAPE! I MUST!



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IN THE DISORDER THAT FOLLOWED, SOME OF THE LABORERS RAN FROM THE GATES, ONLY TO BE CUT DOWN BY GUARDS, WHILE THE OTHER CONVICTS PASSIVELY REMAINED IN THE RANKS! BUT KAZLISKY, IN THE CONFUSION, SLIPPED INTO THE NEARBY WOODS AND RAN TOWARD FREEDOM...
AAIEEE!
FREE! FREE! BUT NOT COMPLETELY! SOON THEY'LL HAVE THE BLOODHOUNDS AFTER ME!
A FARMHOUSE! HAVE THEY BEEN WARNED TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ME?
NO ONE SHALL PREVENT MY ESCAPE FROM BONDAGE!
KAZLISKY STOPPED AT THE PARTLY-OPENED DOOR, AND LOOKED INTO THE DIMLY-LIT ROOM...
A PEASANT! AND ALONE!
THEN, QUIETLY MAKING HIS WAY BEHIND THE MAN AT THE TABLE, HE RAISED THE CRUDE WEAPON AND...
THUD!
QUICKLY, KAZLISKY EXCHANGED CLOTHING WITH THE UNCONSCIOUS PEASANT...
...AND STEALING HIS IDENTIFICATION PAPERS, FADED INTO THE SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT...

FORGIVE ME, COMRADE CAPTAIN... BUT THIS MAN WHOM WE SEEK... WHAT DOES HE LOOK LIKE?
DO YOU THINK I HAVE A PHOTOGRAPHIC FILE IN MY HEAD, DUNCE? THEY TELL ME TO SEARCH FOR A RED-BEARDED, GRIMY CONVICT... THAT IS ALL I HAVE TO KNOW!
OH! MY HEAD! W-WHO ARE YOU? AND WHAT AM I DOING IN THESE RAGS?
SHUT YOUR FACE, DOG, AND COME WITH US! YOU CAN TALK ALL YOU WANT IN THE SALT MINES!
LATER...
INSOLENT CUR! TELL ME THE TRUTH!
WHY DON'T YOU BELIEVE ME? I'M A POOR WOODSMAN, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT!
SLAP!
WELL?
LET'S SEE IF THIS CAN HELP THIS RED-BEARDED SWINE TO TELL THE TRUTH!
MAYBE THE POOR FELLOW FEELS COLD! WARM HIM UP A BIT!
BAH! I JUST WANTED THE SATISFACTION OF HEARING HIM ADMIT HIS IDENTITY, BUT HE'S STUBBORN AS AN OX! TAKE HIM AWAY! KOROFF, SEND A COURIER TO SETSMANGRAD, WITH THE REPORT OF THIS CASE! THE WIND HAS TORN DOWN THE WIRES!
FIVE DAYS LATER, THE COURIER ARRIVED IN SETSMANGRAD WITH THE CAPTAIN'S REPORT...
FROM SIBERIA, COMRADE... COMMANDANT OF CAMP 13 ASKS VERIFICATION OF A PRISONER'S IDENTITY!
БУРО
BAH! I GET PAPERS FROM ALL OVER THE BODAUIA! THIS MUST WAIT ITS TURN! THERE ARE MORE URGENT MATTERS TO BE TAKEN CARE OF FIRST!
APM

LATER, MUCH LATER...
WHY? WHY HAVE THEY LOCKED ME INTO THIS DREADFUL PLACE? WHAT DID I EVER DO? I REMEMBER NOTHING SUBVERSIVE...
THEY SAID I WOULD HAVE MY FREEDOM WHEN WORD ARRIVED FROM SETSMANGRAD...THAT THEY WOULD VERIFY MY IDENTITY AS THE WRONG MAN! BUT WHY HAS IT TAKEN SO LONG!
BUT DO I KNOW HOW LONG IT'S BEEN? HAS IT BEEN DAYS... WEEKS? OHH... THE DESPAIRING BLACKNESS OF THIS HOLE! I CAN'T SEE A WALL, A WINDOW, A LIGHT! I HAVEN'T LEFT THIS CELL SINCE THAT FIRST DAY... AND WHEN WAS THAT?
MEANWHILE, IN THE GUARD ROOM...
LOOK, COMRADE! "REPORTS FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN NEW YORK STATE THAT FEODOR KAZLISKY WAS THE REAL NAME OF A LEADING ANTI-REVOLUTIONIST WHO DIED THERE LAST WEEK!"
ПРАВДА
THEN THAT MAN IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IS NOT KAZLISKY? NO NEED TO WAIT FOR THE REPLY ON HIS STATUS ANY LONGER! LET HIM OUT!
HEY, IN THERE... YOU CAN COME OUT NOW!
COMRADE, YOU ARE MOST KIND! THE WORKINGS OF BUREAUCRATIC RED TAPE CAN BE LONG...SOMETIMES TOO LONG! IT TOOK A BIT OF TIME...
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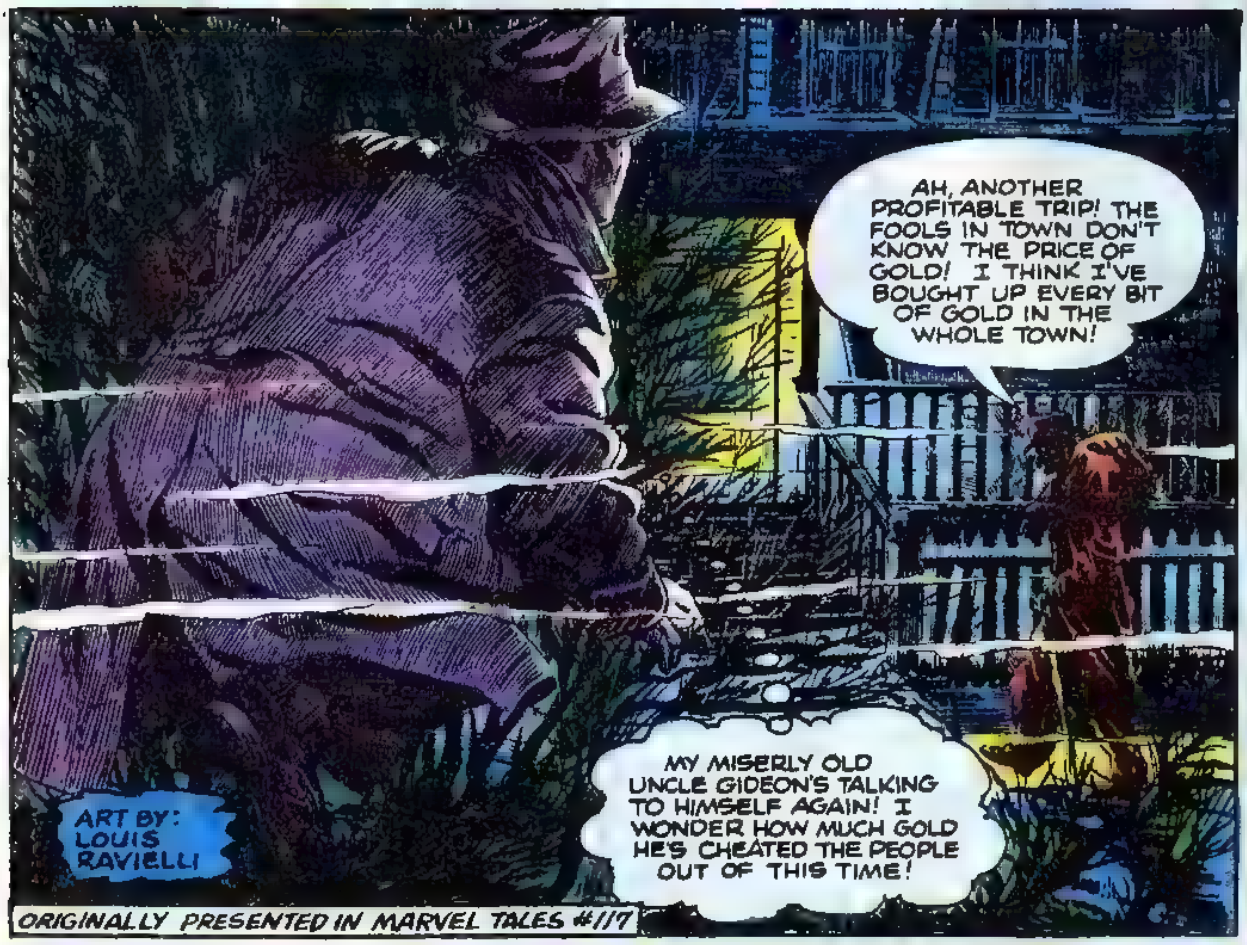
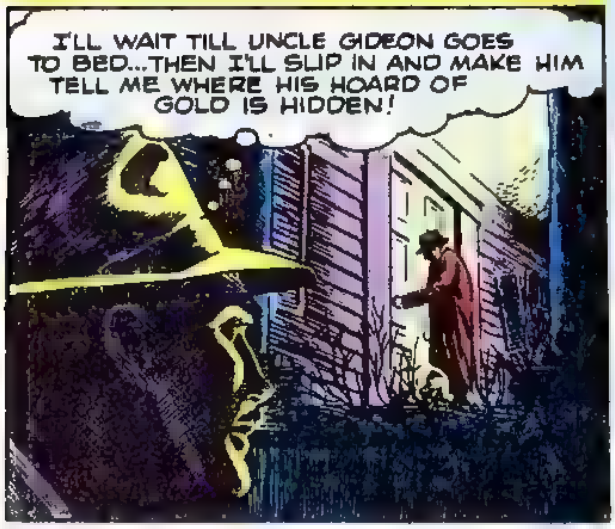
...BUT NOW, AT LAST, I AM FREE!
APRIL 15 1953
THE END

UNCLE GIDEON'S GOLD

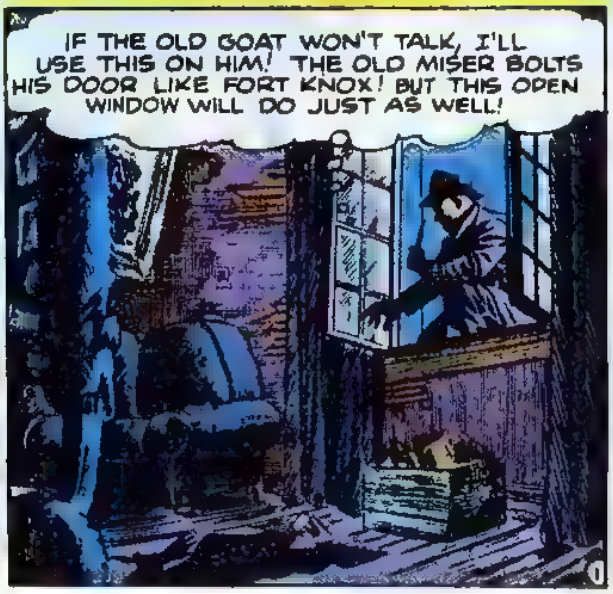

AH, ANOTHER PROFITABLE TRIP! THE FOOLS IN TOWN DON'T KNOW THE PRICE OF GOLD! I THINK I'VE BOUGHT UP EVERY BIT OF GOLD IN THE WHOLE TOWN!
MY MISERLY OLD UNCLE GIDEON'S TALKING TO HIMSELF AGAIN! I WONDER HOW MUCH GOLD HE'S CHEATED THE PEOPLE OUT OF THIS TIME!
ART BY: LOUIS RAVIELLI

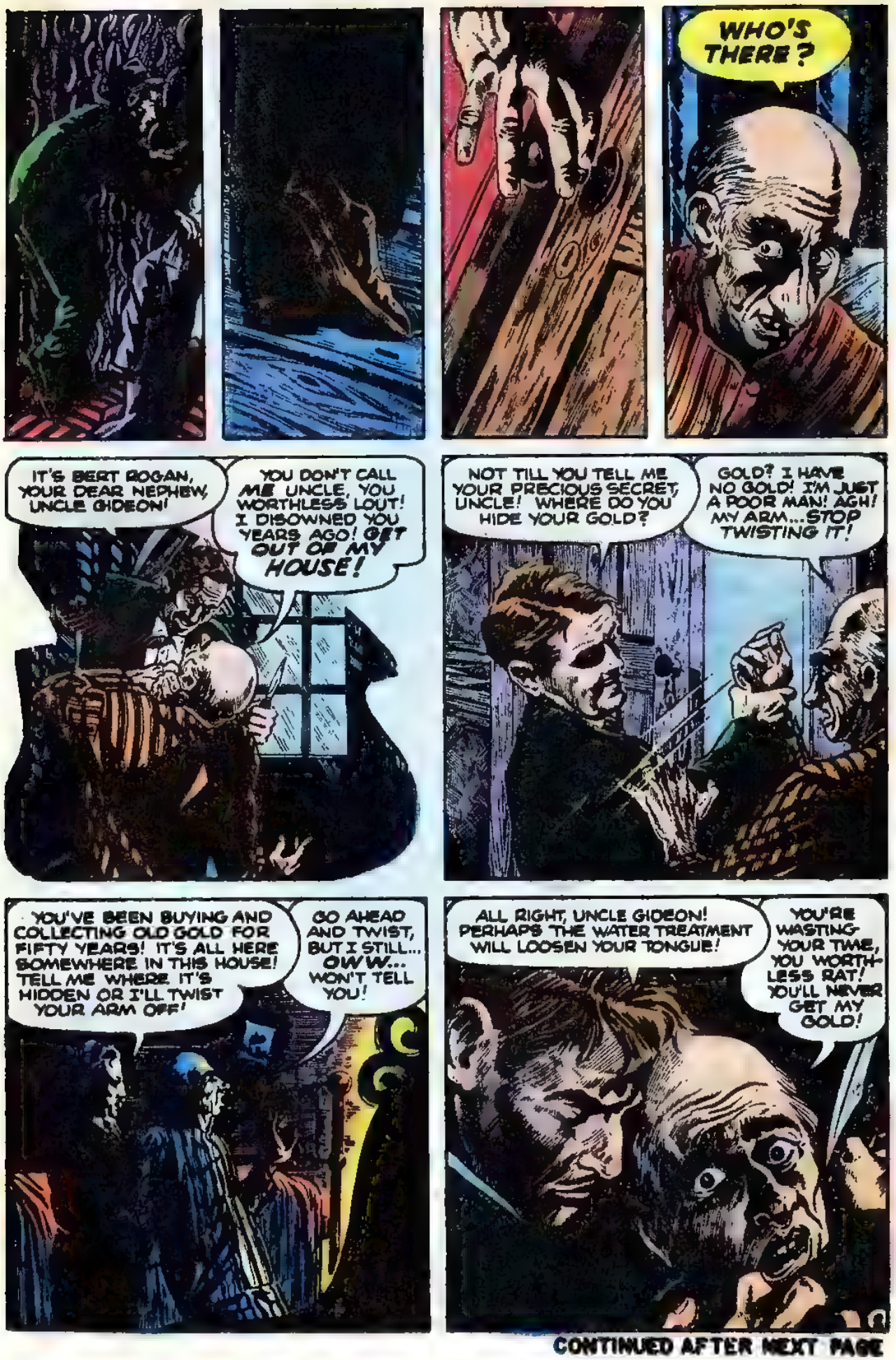
ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MARVEL TALES #117

BUYING OLD GOLD WAS UNCLE GIDEON'S PASSION! HE JUST BOUGHT IT AND HID IT IN HIS OLD HOUSE... AND NOT EVEN HIS NEPHEW, BERT ROGAN, KNEW ITS HIDING PLACE...



HALF AN HOUR LATER...


IF THE OLD GOAT WON'T TALK, I'LL USE THIS ON HIM! THE OLD MISER BOLTS HIS DOOR LIKE FORT KNOX! BUT THIS OPEN WINDOW WILL DO JUST AS WELL!


WHO'S THERE?
IT'S BERT ROGAN, YOUR DEAR NEPHEW, UNCLE GIDEON!
YOU DON'T CALL ME UNCLE, YOU WORTHLESS LOUT! I DISOWNED YOU YEARS AGO! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!
NOT TILL YOU TELL ME YOUR PRECIOUS SECRET, UNCLE! WHERE DO YOU HIDE YOUR GOLD?
GOLD? I HAVE NO GOLD! I'M JUST A POOR MAN! AGH! MY ARM... STOP TWISTING IT!
YOU'VE BEEN BUYING AND COLLECTING OLD GOLD FOR FIFTY YEARS! IT'S ALL HERE SOMEWHERE IN THIS HOUSE! TELL ME WHERE IT'S HIDDEN OR I'LL TWIST YOUR ARM OFF!
GO AHEAD AND TWIST, BUT I STILL... OWW... WON'T TELL YOU!
ALL RIGHT, UNCLE GIDEON! PERHAPS THE WATER TREATMENT WILL LOOSEN YOUR TONGUE!
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, YOU WORTHLESS RAT! YOU'LL NEVER GET MY GOLD!

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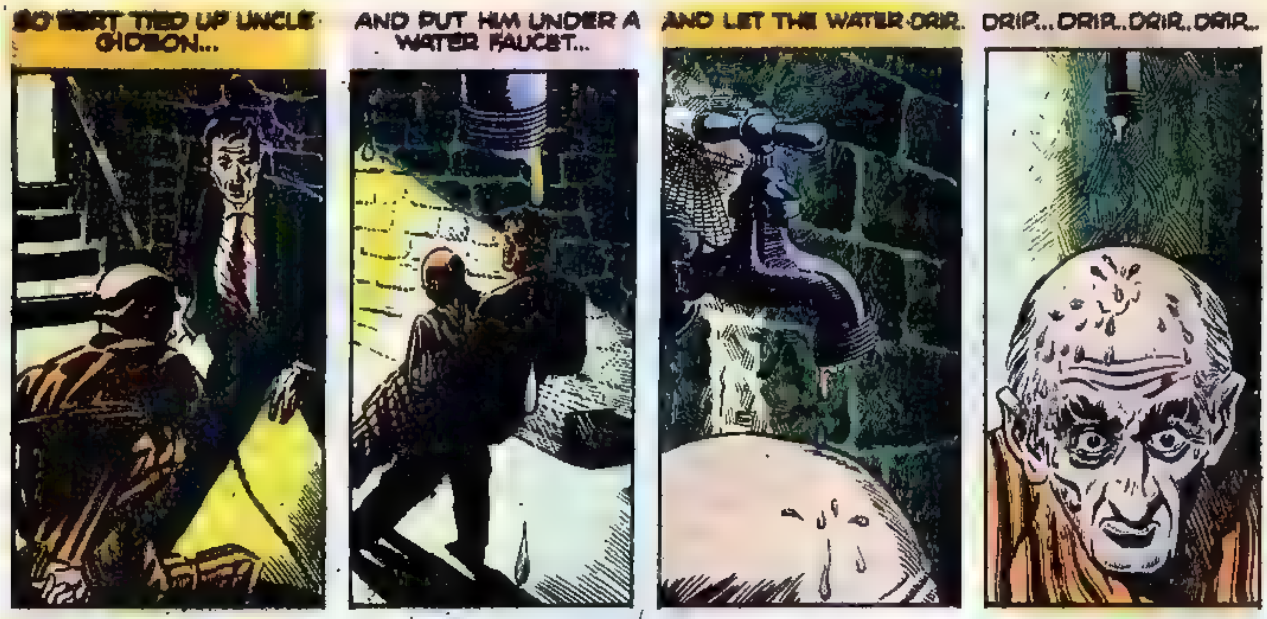
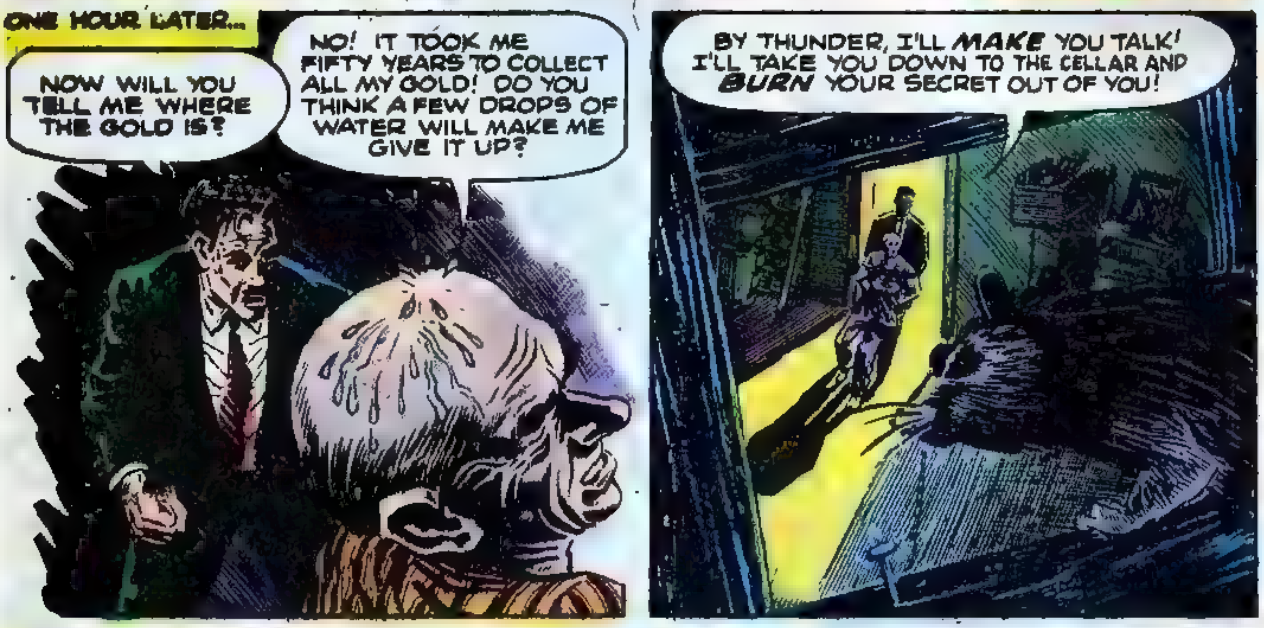
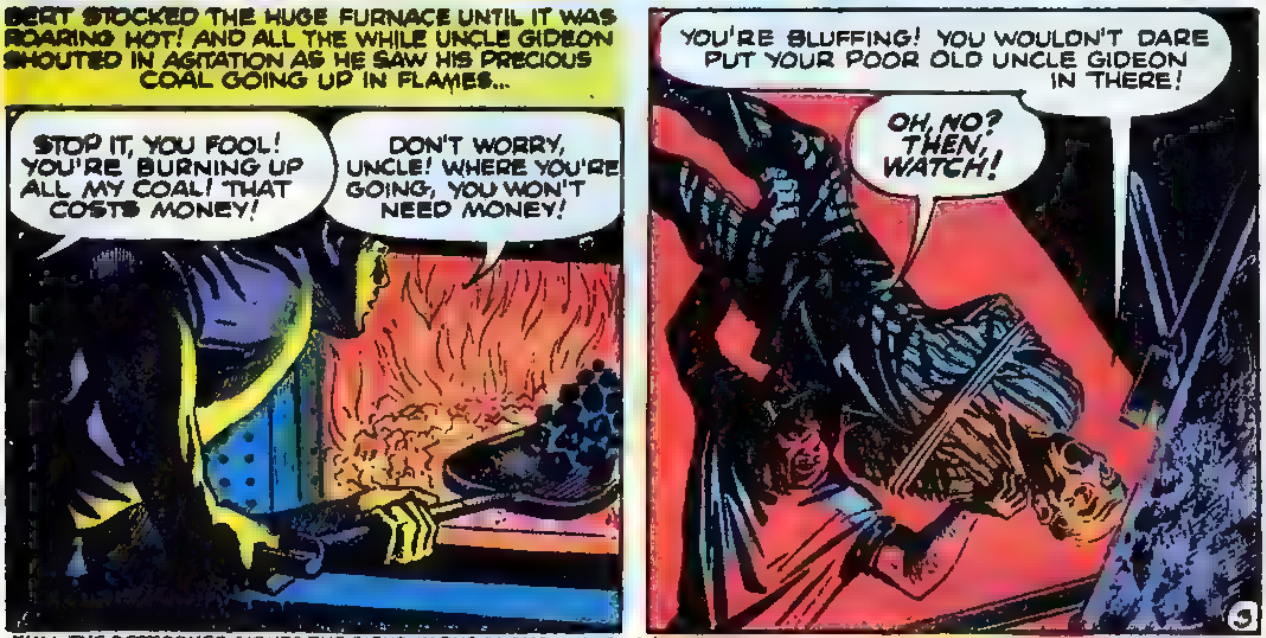



ONE HOUR LATER...
NOW WILL YOU TELL ME WHERE THE GOLD IS?
NO! IT TOOK ME FIFTY YEARS TO COLLECT ALL MY GOLD! DO YOU THINK A FEW DROPS OF WATER WILL MAKE ME GIVE IT UP?
BY THUNDER, I'LL MAKE YOU TALK! I'LL TAKE YOU DOWN TO THE CELLAR AND BURN YOUR SECRET OUT OF YOU!


BERT STOCKED THE HUGE FURNACE UNTIL IT WAS ROARING HOT! AND ALL THE WHILE UNCLE GIDEON SHOUTED IN AGITATION AS HE SAW HIS PRECIOUS COAL GOING UP IN FLAMES...
STOP IT, YOU FOOL! YOU'RE BURNING UP ALL MY COAL! THAT COSTS MONEY!
DON'T WORRY, UNCLE! WHERE YOU'RE GOING, YOU WON'T NEED MONEY!
YOU'RE BLUFFING! YOU WOULDN'T DARE PUT YOUR POOR OLD UNCLE GIDEON IN THERE!
OH, NO? THEN, WATCH!
3

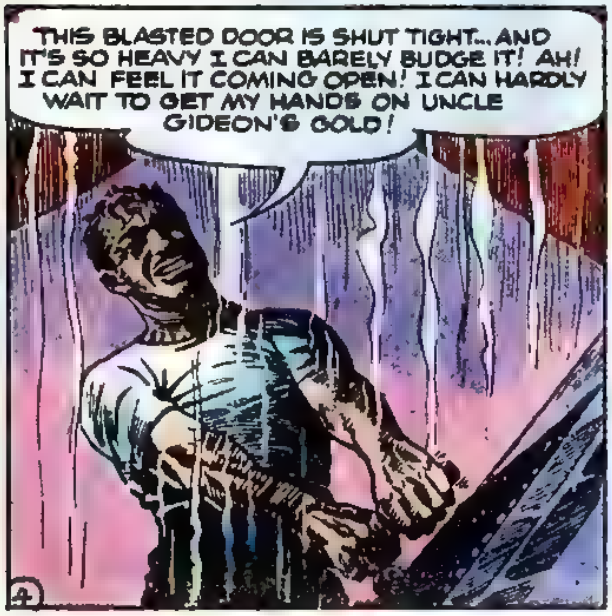
KULL THE DESTROYER FIGHTS THE FIEND IN THE FLAME — IN THIS MONTHS EPIC!

INCHES FROM THE SEARING MAW OF THE FURNACE, THE ROARING FLAMES MELTED THE IRON NERVES OF OLD UNCLE GIDEON...

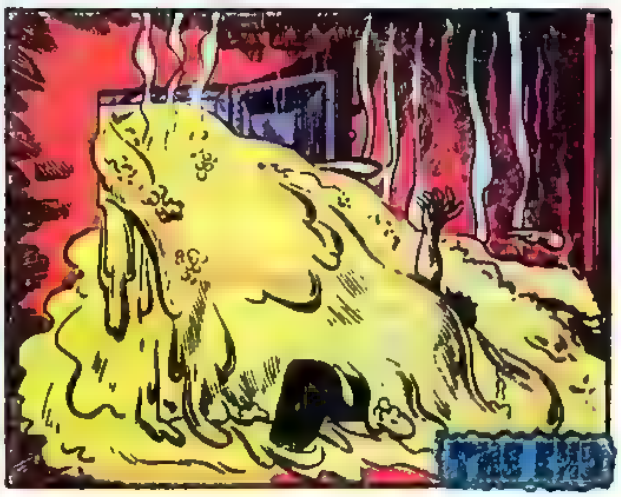
TAKE DOWN THAT PORTRAIT OF MY DEAR OLD GRANDFATHER! THERE'S A SAFE BEHIND IT AND THE GOLD IS IN THERE!
NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEWHERE, UNCLE! WHAT'S THE COMBINATION?

THREE TURNS RIGHT, 25, TWO TURNS LEFT, 48, ONE RIGHT, 48!
HAH! YOU'RE CLEVER, UNCLE! WHO'D EVER THINK OF LOOKING FOR A SAFE OVER A FURNACE!

MINUTES LATER...

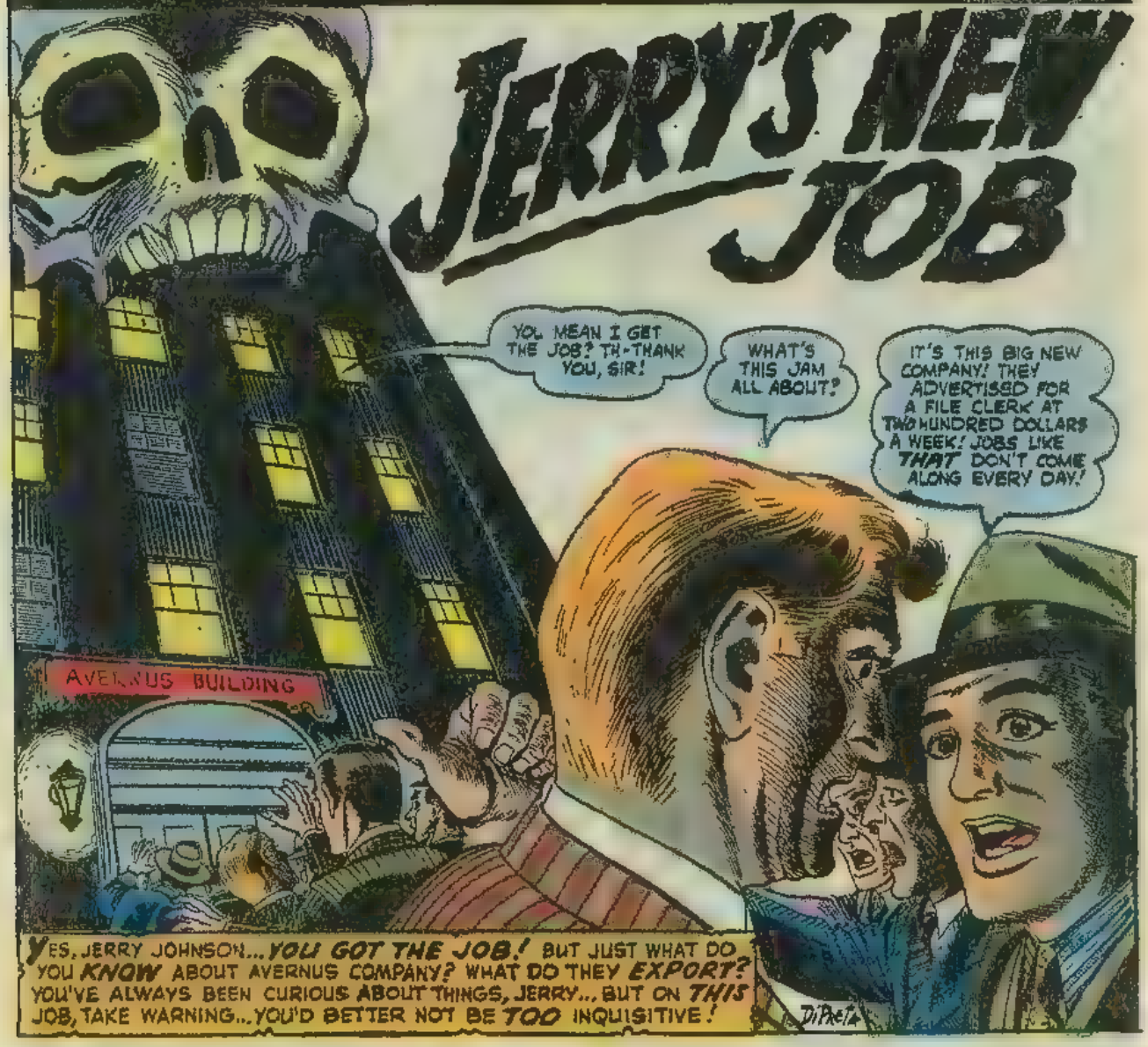

THIS BLASTED DOOR IS SHUT TIGHT...AND IT'S SO HEAVY I CAN BARELY BUDGE IT! AH! I CAN FEEL IT COMING OPEN! I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO GET MY HANDS ON UNCLE GIDEON'S GOLD!
4

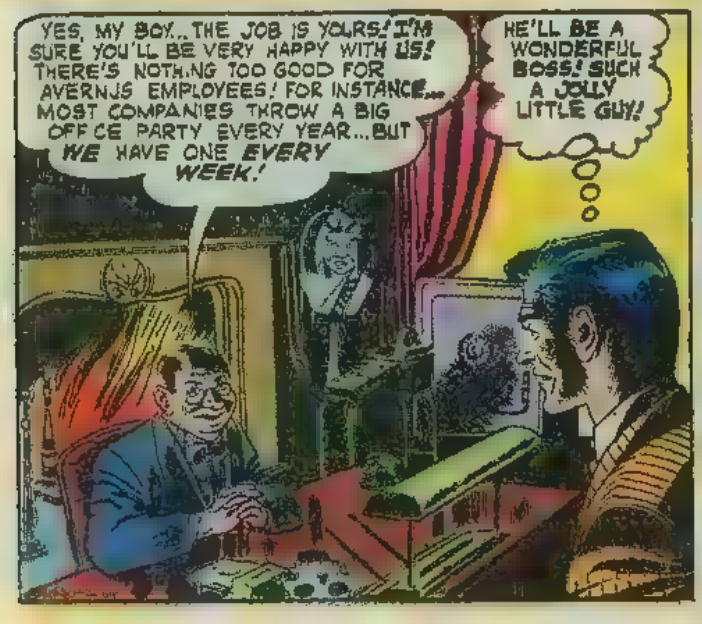
BERT ROGAN DIDN'T HAVE TO WAIT LONG! THE HEAVY DOOR SWUNG OPEN AND HE GOT *MORE GOLD* THAN HE *WANTED!* EVERY OUNCE OF UNCLE GIDEON'S BOILING GUSHER OF *MOLTEN GOLD!*

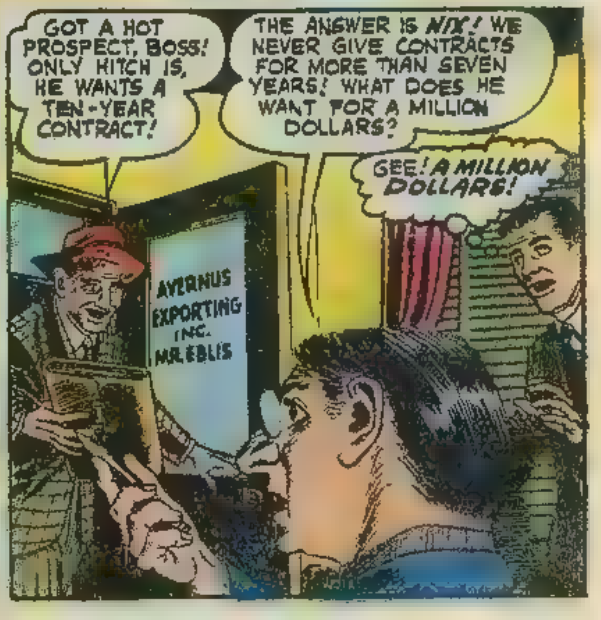


LET'S LEAVE THE ASIANS WRAPPED IN THEIR RED TAPE AND SEE HOW JERRY GETS ALONG ON HIS NEW JOB! IT WAS THE BEST COMPANY JERRY EVER WORKED FOR... BUT THERE WAS ONE STRANGE FACT THAT PUZZLED THE LAD... JUST WHAT WAS THE BOSS SELLING?

JERRY'S NEW JOB


YOU MEAN I GET THE JOB? TH-THANK YOU, SIR!
WHAT'S THIS JAM ALL ABOUT?
IT'S THIS BIG NEW COMPANY! THEY ADVERTISED FOR A FILE CLERK AT TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS A WEEK! JOBS LIKE THAT DON'T COME ALONG EVERY DAY!
AVERNUS BUILDING
YES, JERRY JOHNSON... YOU GOT THE JOB! BUT JUST WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT AVERNUS COMPANY? WHAT DO THEY EXPORT? YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN CURIOUS ABOUT THINGS, JERRY... BUT ON THIS JOB, TAKE WARNING... YOU'D BETTER NOT BE TOO INQUISITIVE!
DiPietro


YES, MY BOY... THE JOB IS YOURS! I'M SURE YOU'LL BE VERY HAPPY WITH US! THERE'S NOTHING TOO GOOD FOR AVERNUS EMPLOYEES! FOR INSTANCE... MOST COMPANIES THROW A BIG OFFICE PARTY EVERY YEAR... BUT WE HAVE ONE EVERY WEEK!
HE'LL BE A WONDERFUL BOSS! SUCH A JOLLY LITTLE GUY!


GOT A HOT PROSPECT, BOSS! ONLY HITCH IS, HE WANTS A TEN-YEAR CONTRACT!
THE ANSWER IS NIX! WE NEVER GIVE CONTRACTS FOR MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS! WHAT DOES HE WANT FOR A MILLION DOLLARS?
GEE! A MILLION DOLLARS!
AVERNUS EXPORTING INC. MR. EBLIS

AND NOW I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE YOU ARE TO WORK! THERE IS ONE VERY IMPORTANT THING YOU MUST REMEMBER... NO MATTER WHAT YOU SEE OR HEAR, YOU MUST NEVER ASK QUESTIONS!
OH SURE, MR. EBLIS! I-I'LL NEVER ASK ANY QUESTIONS!

YESSIR, I GUESS WE HAVE THE RECORD OF EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD IN THE COUNTRY IN THESE FILES! AND WHEN I SEND YOU IN HERE FOR A RECORD, I WANT YOU TO RUN, NOT WALK!
DEAD FILES

IT'S THE MOST EXCITING JOB YOU'VE EVER HAD, EH, JERRY? IT'S LIKE WORKING IN A MADHOUSE!

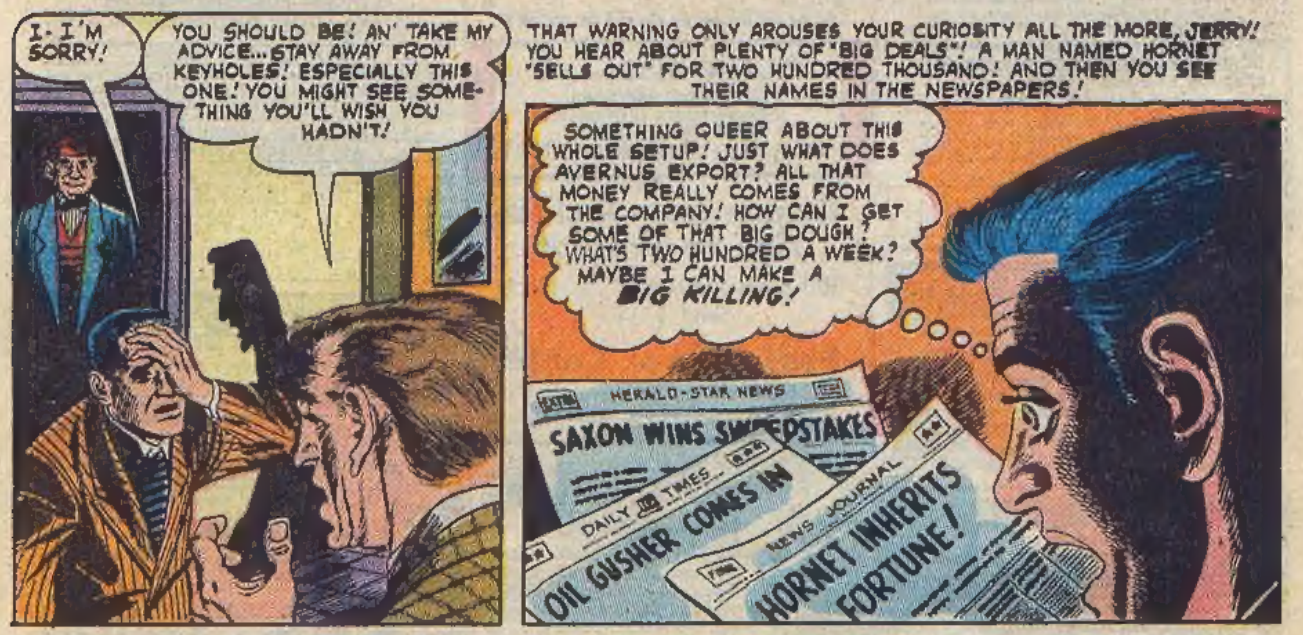
BOSS! BIG DEAL COMING UP!
PAYMENT IS NOW DEMANDED AS AGREED...
THIS FELLOW WANTS US TO MAKE A FULL REFUND AND BACK OUT ON THE DEAL!
TELL HIM BUSINESS IS BUSINESS! TELL HIM WE HAVE WAYS OF COLLECTING!

YOU LISTEN IN WHEN MR. EBLIS GIVES HIS DAILY PEP TALKS TO THE SALESMEN!

BOYS, WE'VE GOT THE WORLD BY THE TAIL! FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE'RE ON A MODERN, BUSINESS-LIKE BASIS! NOW IT'S UP TO YOU TO GET OUT AND PULL IN THE CUSTOMERS! AND DON'T FORGET THE PARTY TONIGHT!
HURRAH FOR AVERNUS!
THREE CHEERS FOR MR. EBLIS!

OH, THOSE WEEKLY PARTIES!!

OH BOY! WHAT A PARTY! WHAT A JOB! AM I LUCKY! BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT AVERNUS COMPANY SELLS! IF I COULD ONLY FIND OUT...
YOU WILL, JERRY... YOU WILL!!


I-I'M SORRY!
YOU SHOULD BE! AN' TAKE MY ADVICE...STAY AWAY FROM KEYHOLES! ESPECIALLY THIS ONE! YOU MIGHT SEE SOMETHING YOU'LL WISH YOU HADN'T!
THAT WARNING ONLY AROUSES YOUR CURIOSITY ALL THE MORE, JERRY! YOU HEAR ABOUT PLENTY OF "BIG DEALS"! A MAN NAMED HORNET "SELLS OUT" FOR TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND! AND THEN YOU SEE THEIR NAMES IN THE NEWSPAPERS!
SOMETHING QUEER ABOUT THIS WHOLE SETUP! JUST WHAT DOES AVERNUS EXPORT? ALL THAT MONEY REALLY COMES FROM THE COMPANY! HOW CAN I GET SOME OF THAT BIG DOUGH? WHAT'S TWO HUNDRED A WEEK? MAYBE I CAN MAKE A BIG KILLING!
HERALD-STAR NEWS
SAXON WINS SWEEPSTAKES
DAILY TIMES
OIL GUSHER COMES IN
NEWS JOURNAL
HORNET INHERITS FORTUNE!

YOU PAUSE IN YOUR RUNNING TO SOUND OUT SOME OF THE SALESMEN ABOUT YOUR CHANCES FOR ADVANCEMENT! MAYBE YOU CAN GET TO BE A SALESMEN YOURSELF!

WHADDA YA WANT? MR. EBLIS' JOB? HA! HA! HA!
LET'S SEND JERRY ON A LONG TRIP TO THE HOME OFFICE! HA! HA! HA!
STICK TO YOUR OWN JOB, KID... YOU'LL NEVER GET TO BE ONE OF US!

YOU DO SOME SPADE WORK IN THE FILES! EBLIS WAS RIGHT...ALL THE NAMES YOU EVER HEARD OF ARE THERE...INCLUDING YOUR OWN!

YOU FIND THAT THE "DEAD" FILES ARE NOT JUST CLOSED ACCOUNTS! THE PEOPLE IN THEM ARE REALLY DEAD!

IS-IS AVERNUS A GIANT MURDER RING...LIKE MURDER, INC.? OH, THAT'S RIDICULOUS! YOU DON'T PAY A MAN A FORTUNE TO LET HIM MURDER YOU! AND IMAGINE A SWEET GUY LIKE MR. EBLIS KILLING ANYBODY!
DECEASED

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JEWEL THIEVES?
SMUGGLING?
CRIME SYNDICATE?
DOPE RING?
ONE THING SURE... AVERNUS COMPANY IS ONLY A FRONT! THERE'S SOMETHING BIG BEHIND IT! AND I'M GONNA FIND OUT WHAT IT IS!

SOMETIMES YOU FEEL AWFULLY UNEASY IN YOUR NEW JOB, JERRY! SOMETIMES YOU FEEL LIKE ICY FINGERS ARE SLIDING UP YOUR SPINE!
WELL, BOY, HOW GOES IT? EVERYBODY HAPPY? BUSINESS BOOMING, HEY?
OH, FINE, SIR! YEAH...EVERYTHING'S JUST FINE!
BUT WHAT IS OUR BUSINESS? THAT GRIN OF HIS IS BEGINNING TO GIVE ME THE CREEPS!

THEN ONE DAY YOU OVERHEAR SOMEONE WHISPERING! YOU CREEP CLOSER!
BOSS, I TELL YOU WE JUST CAN'T GET THIS ONE! HE WON'T SELL OUT!
EVERY MAN HAS HIS PRICE! WHAT IF HIS WIFE SHOULD SUDDENLY NEED AN OPERATION, EH? WE MIGHT HAVE TO DO A LITTLE UNDERGROUND WORK TO MANAGE THAT, OF COURSE! WE DON'T CONTROL THE WHOLE WORLD... YET!
UNDERGROUND WORK! CONTROL THE WORLD! THEY'RE REVOLUTIONISTS! SPIES! ASSASSINS!
KEEP OUT!

BUT OTHERS HAVE SHARP EARS TOO, JERRY!
STOP YOU! I BET IT'S THAT SNEAKIN' FILE CLERK, BOSS! I TOLD YA NOT TO HIRE HIM!

SPIES! THAT'S WHAT THEY ARE...A NEST OF SPIES! IT ALL HANGS TOGETHER! WHAT PEOPLE "SELL OUT" TO MR. EBLIS ARE SECRETS AND SABOTAGE! I'M GONNA STAY RIGHT HERE UNTIL THEY ALL LEAVE! AFTER THE PLACE IS LOCKED UP, I CAN HAVE A GOOD LOOK AROUND!

AND SO, THAT NIGHT...
NOTHING BUT EMPTY SHELVES! THE AVERNUS "EXPORTING" COMPANY IS A FAKE!
SHIPPING DEPT.

YOU GO TO EBLIS' OFFICE! A "MILLION DOLLAR IDEA" IS WHIRLING THROUGH YOUR BRAIN! BUT FIRST YOU NEED SOME REAL EVIDENCE...
THIS IS MY BIG CHANCE! MR. EBLIS WOULD PAY ANYTHING I ASK TO KEEP ME QUIET! JERRY JOHNSON... MILLIONAIRE!

I THOUGHT I SAW A LIGHT IN THIS WINDOW AS I PASSED!

MR. EBLIS!
4

SO YOU'RE GOING TO BLACK-MAIL ME! HA! HA! HA! FOR A MILLION DOLLARS! HA! HA! THAT'S THE BEST JOKE I EVER HEARD! WHO'D BELIEVE YOU, MY BOY? WHO'D EVER BELIEVE A JOLLY LITTLE MAN LIKE ME COULD BE... A SPY!
THAT'S JUST THE POINT, MR. EBLIS! NO ONE EVER WOULD SUSPECT YOU! BUT I DO! I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE!
OH, NO, YOU DON'T! I PAID YOU A BIG SALARY... NOT TO ASK QUESTIONS! ALL THE OTHER EMPLOYEES WERE SENT UP FROM THE HOME OFFICE, BUT WE NEEDED MORE HELP! I UNDERESTIMATED THE CURIOSITY OF THE HUMAN RACE! YOU'RE THE FIRST OF THEM I EVER HIRED... AND THE LAST!
WE CAN'T AFFORD THE FAINTEST SUSPICION OF OUR NEW SETUP HERE! AN INVESTIGATION WOULD RUIN US! SO... I'LL HAVE TO GET RID OF YOU!
FIRE ME, YOU MEAN? OH, NO, MR. EBLIS! I'M CRAZY ABOUT MY JOB! FORGET ABOUT THE MILLION!... A THOUSAND WOULD BE FINE! AND I DID KEEP MY PROMISE! I DIDN'T ASK ANY QUESTIONS!
BUT YOU SNOOPED! YOU SNEAKED! YOU HAVE A SNOOPING, SNEAKING LITTLE SOUL, HAVEN'T YOU, JERRY?
NOW YOU'RE FRIGHTENED, JERRY! NOW YOU KNOW YOU'VE MADE A BIG MISTAKE! YOU STAMMER AND TRY TO SMOOTH THINGS OVER...
YOU AREN'T GOING TO KILL ME? YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN SO GENEROUS, S-SO GOOD TO ME... I'M SURE YOU WOULDN'T HARM ME! YOU'RE S-SO KIND, SO...
MAYBE SO, JERRY, MAYBE SO! BUT YOU'VE MADE AN INFERNAL NUISANCE OF YOURSELF! IT'S TIME YOU WERE EXPORTED LIKE ALL THOSE OTHER CLIENTS OF MINE! AND IT'S TIME YOU LEARNED THAT...
I...
...AIN'T...
...NO...
...ANGEL!
THERE WAS THE DEVIL TO PAY FOR JERRY, EH? WELL, THERE'S MORE EXCITMENT COMING UP IN A CHILLING LESSON IN LYCANTHROPY!